

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 213888

LIMDIS; FOR HOUGHTON AND MACK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED
LEBANON

REF: NICOSIA 2502

1. WE ARE SURPRISED BY ICRC PLANS TO PHASE OUT THE COM-
MODITY IMPORT PROGRAM WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, PARTICULARLY
AS THE ICRC HAS PROVIDED A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF FUNDING
NEEDS BEYOND OCTOBER 1, 1976 WHICH SUGGESTS AN INTENTION
TO CONTINUE ITS PRESENT PROGRAM IN LEBANON AT PRESENT
LEVELS. WE INTEND TO CONSULT WITH ICRC'S GENEVA HEAD-
QUARTERS ON THIS QUESTION.

2. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE BEEN FUNNELING A SUBSTANTIAL
QUANTITY OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO LEBANON, THROUGH THE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND THROUGH SUBSIDIES TO THE
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ICRC EFFORTS. IN RECENT MONTHS, MEDICAL SUPPLIES COULD

NOT BE CHanneled TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON THROUGH AUH, AS WAS ORIGINALLY DONE, AND WE HAVE THEREFORE HAD TO RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON THE ICRC CHANNEL.

3. THERE IS NO PROSPECT THAT WE WILL CUT BACK ON OUR ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE AUH CHANNEL. ON THE CONTRARY, WE ARE

CONSIDERING WAYS OF EXPANDING OR REORGANIZING OUR EFFORTS TO GO BEYOND THE PRESENT CONCENTRATION ON WAR-RELATED CASUALTIES. THERE MAY BE SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE OFFING, FOR EXAMPLE, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR LARGE-

SCALE IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMS.

4. CLEARLY, WE CANNOT CONDUCT A PROGRAM WHICH WILL APPEAR TO BENEFIT ONE SIDE OR AREA PRIMARILY, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN CHRISTIAN EMISSARIES, SUCH AS ARCHBISHOP ABOUT JAUDI, ARE TELLING US THAT THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR MEDICINES, MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND VACCINES IN THE CHRISTIAN AREA AND MEMBERS OF THE LEBANESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, ARMENIAN VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS, ETC. ARE PRODUCING FOR ALL WHO WILL LISTEN REPORTS OF DESPERATE CONDITIONS AMONG THE LEBANESE PEOPLE.

5. YOUR CONVERSATION WITH MICHEL KHOURY IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE NATURE OF OUR PROBLEM. FROM WHAT WE UNDERSTAND FROM YOUR REPORTING, HE MAY HAVE NO IDEA OF THE EFFORTS WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN MAKING AND MIGHT REGARD ANY EXPANSION OR REORGANIZATION OF OUR EFFORTS AS A NEW INITIATIVE, WHICH IT IS NOT. WE ARE NOT PARTICULARLY SURPRISED THAT THE QUESTION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE WAS NOT A MAJOR TOPIC OF CONCERN AMONG THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS WITH WHOM YOU SPOKE. THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE CONVERSANT WITH SUPPLY AND, PARTICULARLY, DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS REGARDING MEDICAL SERVICES AND, IN ANY CASE, CLEARLY HAVE TOPICS OF A MORE POLITICAL NATURE ON THEIR MINDS. WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE OUR EFFORTS TO URGE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO LEBANON'S CIVIL STRIFE, WE NEVERTHELESS CANNOT IGNORE REAL HUMANITARIAN NEEDS WHICH DO EXIST.

6. ON YOUR RETURN TO JOUNIEH, WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO RAISE
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OUR HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS, BUT IT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ONE OF THE LEBANESE RED CROSS OFFICIALS, SUCH AS DR. MICHEL NASIR, TO SEE HOW THEY PERCEIVE THE SITUATION. IT ALSO MIGHT BE USEFUL TO ARRANGE, THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE PATRIARCH AND WITH HIS CONCURRENCE, TO SEE ARCHBISHOP ABOUT JAOUDE FOR A REVIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE SCENE AS HE VIEWS IT. IF HE HAS NOT RETURNED TO LEBANON, YOU MIGHT TRY TO TALK

TO A MEMBER OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES DEALING WITH HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. WE ARE
NOT, OF COURSE, IN A POSITION TO MAKE COMMITMENTS ON THIS
QUESTION AT PRESENT, BUT YOUR VISITS SHOULD BE EXPLAINED AS
PART OF AN EFFORT TO ROUND OUT OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF
THIS QUESTION. KISSINGER

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